

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 287791

NODIS

FOR BRZEZINSKI

FOLLOWING REPEAT MEXICO 20013 ACTION SECSTATE DEC 2.

QUOTE: S E C R E T MEXICO 20013

NODIS

DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED

E. O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PBOR, BH, MX

SUBJECT: BELIZE

1. DURING MY DEC 1 CONVERSATION WITH ROEL, HIS BASIC
POSITION ON BELIZE WAS THAT IF TERRITORIAL CESSION SETTLE-
MENT IS ACCEPTABLE TO PRICE, IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM.

DURING PRICE'S VISIT HERE, HE HAD NOT PUSHED HIM ONE WAY
OR THE OTHER BUT HAD ONLY ASKED FOR HIS POINT OF VIEW.

AT THAT TIME PRICE HAD SAID THAT HE WOULD RATHER SEE
BELIZE STAY UNDER BRITISH RULE THAN AGREE TO CESSION OF
ANY BELIZEAN TERRITORY. IF PRICE CHANGES HIS VIEW, THEN,

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ROEL SAID, WHATEVER PRICE FINDS ACCEPTABLE WILL BE AGREE-
ABLE TO MEXICO. (ROEL DID NOT SAY SPECIFICALLY WHAT HAD
BEEN OUTCOME OF HIS DISCUSSION WITH LOPEZ PORTILLO
EVENING OF NOVEMBER 28, ON HIS RETURN FROM DISCUSSION WITH
ROWLANDS IN NEW YORK.)

2. IN RESPONSE TO MY STATEMENT THAT TORRIJOS WAS BEING

HELPFUL IN TRYING TO PERSUADE PRICE TO ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT INVOLVING TERRITORIAL CESSION, ROEL SAID THAT TORRIJOS' HELP WAS NATURAL, SINCE HE WANTED RATIFICATION OF THE CANAL TREATIES AND THE ADDITIONAL REVENUE THAT WOULD COME TO PANAMA UNDER THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

3. REGARDING THE TORRIJOS-SPONSORED MEETING IN KINGSTON DECEMBER 9, REPORTED IN PANAMA 8513, ROEL SAID HE HAD BEEN TELEPHONED ABOUT MEXICAN PARTICIPATION. HIS ATTITUDE WAS NEGATIVE. HE SAID THAT THE MINI-CHIEF OF STATE MEETING IN BOGOTA HAD BEEN A FAILURE, AND ASKED WHAT WAS THE SENSE OF ANOTHER MEETING OF THAT TYPE ON BELIZE? WHAT WAS THERE TO DISCUSS, HE ASKED. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY WOULD NOT ATTEND THE MEETING, BUT DID NOT SAY WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD SEND A REPRESENTATIVE.

4. ROEL SAID THAT HE EXPECTED THAT ROWLANDS WOULD VISIT MEXICO CITY IN MID-DECEMBER. HE INDICATED THAT MEXICO WOULD KEEP ITS POSITION ON BELIZE FLEXIBLE UNTIL AFTER THIS MEETING.

5. ROEL WONDERED OUT LOUD WHY THE USG WAS SO ANXIOUS, AS HE PUT IT, TO PULL THE BRITISH CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE FIRE ON THE BELIZE ISSUE. AFTER ALL, HE COMMENTED, THE US WAS A MAJOR WORLD POWER AND BRITISH INFLUENCE WAS WANING. WHY WAS THE US SO ANXIOUS TO ASSIST THE BRITISH ON BELIZE?

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I EXPLAINED THAT WE SAW BELIZE AS A FESTERING HEMISPHERIC PROBLEM THAT COULD ERUPT AND SPREAD, AND WE WERE ANXIOUS TO SEE IT SOLVED PEACEFULLY BEFORE IT HAD A CHANCE TO WORSEN TO THE DETRIMENT OF ALL, INCLUDING THE US.

6. ROEL INDICATED THAT, IN GENERAL, HE STILL WANTS MEXICO TO HAVE A PLACE AT THE BARGAINING TABLE WHEN A BELIZE SETTLEMENT IS DECIDED. IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER IT WAS SECURE ACCESS TO CHETUMAL THAT TROUBLED MEXICO, HE INDICATED THAT IT WAS PART OF MEXICO'S CONCERN.

7. REGARDING HIS NOVEMBER 25 TELEPHONE CALL TO SECRETARY VANCE, ROEL SAID THAT AFTER HIS LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH ROWLANDS, HE HAD NOT FELT THERE WAS ENOUGH NEW TO MERIT HIS ASKING TO SEE THE SECRETARY PERSONALLY, SO HE HAD TELEPHONED INSTEAD OF COMING TO WASHINGTON. HE SAID THAT HE WAS STILL WORKING ON A PROPOSAL FOR THE SECRETARY ON UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS, BUT IT WAS NOT YET READY FOR PRESENTATION. LUCEY
UNQUOTE VANCE

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